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ABSTRACT

The role of English and English instruction in Norway is reviewed. English is important in many of Norway's industries and most Norwegians speak or understand some English. Within the education system, English instruction is introduced around the age of 11. The role of English instruction within the education system, English examinations, English at the postsecondary level, teacher training, instructional materials, adult education, and the British and American roles in English instruction are examined. In conclusion, rapid and sweeping changes in the Norwegian educational system are having unpredictable effects on English education. (RW)

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THE BRITISH COUNCIL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DIVISION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROFILE

ED233592

Country: NORWAY

May 1980

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROFILE

Country: NORWAY May 1980

1. The role of English

1.1 Norway is a country of 4 million people with a highly-developed democratic and centralised state education system, an outine of which will be found in our Educational Profile for Norway. The only other peoples with whom communication is possible through Norwegian are the Swedes, Danes and Icelanders, and since the end of World War 2 English has been recognised as the first foreign language. As the country relies heavily on its invisible and visible exports, English is as important in shipping, insurance and banking as it is in industry and commerce in general; and international exchanges in technology and science, in the humanities and in diplomacy are largely conducted in English. Internally, most Norwegians are exposed to a great deal of English through TV, radio and films; many (even popular) books are not available in translation; and non-Nordic tourists, even the French and Germans, accept English as the lingua franca, while Norwegians themselves expect to use it when they travel outside Scandinavia. English is thus important both to the country and to the individual, and people of all ages are motivated to learn it. Almost everyone understands some English, and very many Norwegians speak it fluently.

1.2 English is not formally recognised as a medium of instruction, but non-Scandinavians lecture and teach in it at university level, and in some disciplines (eg medicine, engineering, economics and the social sciences) many of the textbooks are British or American. English is not a second language, despite the ease with which some Norwegians converse in it with each other at international conferences or in the presence of non-Norwegians; for historical reasons Norwegians are very conscious of and devoted to their own languages. But in some narrow fields in which it has been the major language of development (the oil industry, telecommunications, air travel etc) English could well become a second language.

2. English within the Educational System (Schools)

2.1 Compulsory education

Compulsory education in the Basic School (grunnskolen) lasts for nine years, from 7+ to 16, and is divided between the junior stage (barnetrinnet) (7.13) and the youth stage (ungdomstrinnet) (13-16). Schools have a 5-day 30-period week, classes do not exceed 30, there is no streaming, and policy is to absorb handicapped children as far as possible into ordinary classes.

2.2 English in the compulsory school

English is now usually started in the 4th class (ie at age 11), though some schools introduce songs and games etc in English in the 3rd class. The number of periods is as shown below (though in the 4th and 5th classes some schools have 4 ½-lessons):

Class	4	5	6	7	8	9
No of English lessons:	2	2	3	3	3	3

2.3 The upper secondary school

Upper secondary education (Videregaende opplaering) is defined as post compulsory schooling catering principally for the 16-19 age group. Between 1976 and 1979 a sweeping re-organisation has taken place to integrate grammer (gymnasium) vocational, commercial and technical schools into a comprehensive system with the aim of providing opportunities for all who wish to follow courses for 2 and 3 years (or 4 in some cases).

The general studies option (allmennfag) most nearly resembles the former grammar school curriculum and is followed by the majority of those wishing to continue their education beyond school. The other courses are in vocational subjects and are usually terminal. The general studies course consists of a one-year foundation study after which students specialise along 'lines'. The most popular of these are the natural sciences, social sciences and languages lines. An alternative pattern consists of a 2-year foundation course followed by either a one-year supplementary course or a transfer into one of the general study or vocational courses.

2.4 English in the upper secondary school

2.4.1 General study course - languages:

1st class	4 lessons per week
2nd class	6 lessons per week
3rd class	5 lessons per week

2.4.2 General study course - social sciences:

1st class	4 lessons per week
2nd class	3 lessons per week
3rd class	5 lessons per week

2.4.3 General study course - natural sciences

1st class	4 lessons per week
2nd class	3 lessons per week
3rd class	0 lessons per week

2.4.4 The new 2-year basic course:

1st class	4 lessons per week
2nd class	3 lessons per week

2.4.5 This new 2-year basic course will be followed by a 3rd-year supplementary course in which 16-17 periods per week will be devoted to 'study courses and electives'. Pupils taking the modern languages course in this 3rd year have 6-8 lessons of English per week, though the figure may vary according to the particular combination of subjects chosen.

2.4.6 As an alternative to the 2-year general study course followed by a 3rd year supplementary course, pupils may take a 3-year vocational study course in eg aesthetic subjects, trade and office work, handicraft and industry, home economics, agricultural subjects, or practical social subjects. The part that English will play in these will vary, and has not yet been finally determined;

it may appear as part of a study course, or as an elective or optional subject.

2.5 Examinations

The Norwegian school system has traditionally been dominated by examination requirements. Parliament and the Ministry of Education now wish, for social and pedagogic reasons, to reduce and perhaps ultimately eliminate official examinations within the schools, but have met considerable opposition from parents, teachers, employers and the pupils themselves.

2.5.1 The youth school (Ungdomsskolen)

Pupils leaving the youth school take a written and/or oral examination in May-June. The final written examinations (in Norwegian, mathematics and English) are the same all over the country. Normally pupils take a written examination in one of these subjects and examinations are arranged in such a way that pupils in different parts of the country take the written examination in different subjects. On leaving the youth school pupils are given a certificate showing marks based both upon examinations and upon continuous assessment throughout the school year together with marks for order and conduct.

2.5.2 The upper secondary school (general study course)

The 3-year course (previously the gymnasium) terminates in Examen Artium, which can be equated roughly with the present A-level examination in England, and which serves as an entrance qualification to the universities and to other forms of higher education. (But some 10% of those beginning university-level studies in 1976 had some entrance qualification other than (Examen Artium.) Candidates take five 4 or 5 hour written papers and an oral test in their main subjects, and in these and their other subjects are given 'oral' marks which may be based on oral examination but generally represent a 'continuous assessment' mark awarded by the subject teacher. Pupils in the modern languages 'line' take their English examination at the end of their third year, those in other 'lines' at the end of the second year. Examen Artium in its present form is to be phased out, and will be held for the last time in 1981. What will take its place has not yet been decided.

2.5.3 English examinations in the youth school

Various types of examination have been used in recent years in the final examinations in English. The written examination used in 1979 consisted of 5 sections including answers to questions on a text, completion of a conversation, narratives based on a series of pictures and a composition. All 5 sections were related to a single narrative theme and the answers to all were required to be given in English. Specimen papers may be consulted in the English Language Division of the British Council.

2.5.4 English examinations in the upper secondary school

The written examinations consist of reading comprehension and essay writing whilst the oral involves listening comprehension and discussion of a text.

2.6 Content and aims: language and literature

The Ministry of Education issues general and detailed guidance in the form of indicative syllabuses, curricula and teaching methods though teachers are encouraged to innovate within the agreed parameters

2.6.1 The 9-year compulsory school (the basic school)

The aim of English teaching is: to give pupils a practical language competence enabling them to increase their range of contacts in speech and in writing; to lay a foundation for further study of English; and to motivate the pupils to develop their skills and active interest in English. Increasing emphasis is laid on the acquisition and use of oral skills; the structures to be taught in each year are identified; and a basic vocabulary of some 2000 words has been tentatively issued. The teaching material is intended to give pupils some knowledge of conditions in Britain and the USA, both past and contemporary, and some concept of English as an international language. In practice, in the initial stages, content is subordinated to structure and vocabulary, but some picture emerges of life in Britain today. At the 'youth' stage (7th-9th classes) more information is provided about contemporary Britain and - to a lesser extent - the USA, and a little historical background may appear. Literature as a separate subject has no place, but some modern texts may be chosen (though perhaps simplified) partly for their literary value. Currently work is progressing on producing a list of basic topics to which all pupils should be exposed though this is likely to prove controversial.

2.6.2 The upper secondary school: aims

The transition from the compulsory school to the traditional gymnasium has been a difficult one, in English as in other subjects. Textbooks have been markedly more advanced, more application has been expected, and teaching methods have been more academic. This is changing, and will change more as the new upper secondary school comes into being and more flexible and less academic courses are worked out. Meanwhile, the aims of English teaching at this level are broadly defined thus:

a. to develop the pupils' ability to understand spoken and written English,

b. to develop their proficiency in speaking and writing English;

c. to give them a knowledge of cultural and social life in the English-speaking world, and to contribute to their own development.

The Education Authorities produce only broad outlines delineating the course objectives. It is required that pupils should combine intensive and extensive reading of literature (novels, plays, poetry) and texts illuminating contemporary economic, social and cultural conditions in the English speaking world. Students on the languages 'line' should in addition read a play of Shakespeare or a work of similar standing by another recognised pre-twentieth century author. In the case of students who will be having just

two years of English the teacher may, in consultation with his pupils, restrict the reading to twentieth-century literature only (and in the case of students on the social sciences 'line' to business English).

2.7 English in the school system: some final comments

Within the state schools (and there are no others of real significance), syllabuses, the examination system and the availability of textbooks (core course materials) are all centrally controlled by the Ministry of Education and its specialist executive and advisory Councils; but within these limits teachers are encouraged to use their own imaginations and initiatives. There is no Inspectorate comparable with that in Britain; but there is a network of local teachers centres and pedagogic- and subject-advisers, who are at present primarily occupied with problems of the nine-year basic school.

The Ministry has two ELT qualified native-speaker advisers in English, recruited and subsidised by the British Council, who cooperate with and are attached to the advisory Councils, their functions may be summarised as:

a. to visit schools, to teach, assist and advise teachers, and make a contribution to the teaching situation;

b. to organise and conduct short intensive in-service courses for teachers of English under the aegis of local authorities;

c. to cooperate with the Councils in the approval of text-books, the production of taped and printed material, and the construction of tests and examination papers.

3. English within the Educational System (Colleges of Education)

3.1 The Colleges of Education

The Colleges of Education Pedagogiskehøgskoler) provide a basic 3-year training including education theory, teaching practice, pedagogical studies in the majority of subjects taught in the compulsory schools and further study of selected subjects. Courses are normally expressed in terms of a credit system where a 1-year course is worth 20 points, a half-year course 10 points and a 3-month course 4 points.

3.2 English in the Colleges of Education - types of courses

English is therefore now available:

a. as a special full-time 1-year course (currently at 8 colleges);

b. as a ½-year course, either taken as a block or spread over a year in conjunction with some other specialisation (currently at 8 colleges);

c. as a 3-month course, normally spread over a longer period and taken in conjunction with other special subjects.

Originally the specialist courses in English, as in other subjects, were intended partly as in-service training for practising teachers wishing to extend their teaching range. Increasingly they now form part of initial training. In 1976 250 students were taking a 1-year course in English, 165 a ½-year course.

3.3 English in the Colleges of Education - course content

Within limits, the colleges construct their own courses and set and moderate their own examinations; they are gradually ceasing to be over-influenced by university models. They have become less 'seminarist' in recent years, and more flexible in time-tabling and teaching methods. They still use the lecture, and large classes, but allow far more time for group work and individual projects than formerly. There is quite a bit of variety, but a typical 1-year or ½-year course will contain the following elements:

the methodology of teaching English to 10-16 year olds;

use of textbooks, preparation of material, use of group methods;

grammar and structures;

oral practice (pronunciation, stress, intonation, acquisition of oral fluency);

background studies (British and US);

literature (intensive studies of fairly recent British and US novels, plays, verse);

periods of teaching practice (organised in different ways).

3.4 The Newcastle Course

Comparable to the 1-year courses is the course which the Ministry of Education runs each year in Newcastle, in collaboration with the University there, intended for some 30 practising teachers. It is taught mainly by British staff, though there is a Norwegian 'tutor', who is normally appointed for one year at a time.

3.5 The Norwegian Study Centre at Nonington

The Norwegian Study Centre programme is conducted by the Hilderstone English Language Centre and Nonington College working jointly at Nonington College, Kent, under the supervision of a full-time tutor seconded there by the Norwegian Ministry of Education. Courses are arranged for teachers and students of English by the Norwegian University Departments of English and the Colleges of Education. The British Council and the Folkeuniversitet (see section 7) are currently financing an annual 4-week course for teachers of English from Norway's northernmost province of Finnmark in collaboration with the Hilderstone Centre.

4. English within the Educational System (the Universities etc)

Traditionally the Colleges of Education have trained teachers for the junior stages (now up to 16), while the Universities have prepared teachers for the gymnasia (now the upper-secondary schools). Although the majority of

university arts graduates, and a large number of science graduates, have always entered the teaching profession, university faculties have hardly taken this into account in framing their courses and examination requirements which have been conceived in traditional academic terms. This situation is now changing somewhat - partly because it is government policy to work towards an integrated teaching profession by recognising College of Education qualifications as elements in a university degree (See 5. The Teaching Cadre.)

4.1 The universities

The typical arts degree consists of 3 subjects (eg Norwegian, English, history; or German, English, and education), the subjects being studied and the examinations taken consecutively and not concurrently, and the period of study occupying a total of 4-5½ years. In order to be formally qualified to teach, graduates then attend a 6-month course in education known as the pedagogisk seminar, which includes a short course in methods. (There is also a shorter summer course which provides the same formal qualification.)

4.2 English in the universities: courses and examinations

All four Norwegian universities (Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø) provide courses in English. The examinations are held at 3 levels:

grunnfag (subsidiary) - taken after a 1-year course;

mellomfag (minor) - taken after a 1½-year course, or a 1/2-year course after grunnfag;

hovedfag (major) - taken after 2 years of study beyond mellomfag.

4.3 English in the universities: content

The two main components of courses at grunnfag and mellomfag level have traditionally been language and literature, the former defined as language history and philology, the latter mainly the history of literature. Although these academic traditions persist, the definitions have been expanded and up-dated. Language now includes some linguistics, phonetics (=oral work), and grammar; and it is now possible to take engelsk mellomfag without having read much literature written before 1800. At hovedfag level (which is partly by written and oral examination and partly thesis) a high degree of specialisation, whether in language or in literature, is expected. Background (for lack of a better word) is still the Cinderella of the disciplines, despite its obvious relevance to school teaching, chiefly because it is interpreted as lacking the intellectual ballast of language or literatur

4.4 The universities: English outside the faculties of English

In other subjects (eg medicine, engineering, pure science, technology, economics and sociology) many of the prescribed or recommended texts are British or American, and there may be expatriate staff lecturing in English. But the Faculties of English are not expected to act as service departments by providing instruction for students of these subjects, either in general English or in English for Special Purposes. Nor do the other faculties or departments themselves recognise any responsibility for this. (One exception is the Norwegian Institute of Technology at Trondheim (Norges Tekniske Høgskole) where there is a

Lectureship in technical English, attached to the office of the Director of Studies). To the extent that the need for ESP instruction has not been recognised, one may say that it barely exists.

4.5 The District Colleges (Distriktshøgskoler)

District Colleges have been established since 1968/9 to provide post-school education at tertiary level but, unlike the universities, by offering shorter courses often vocationally orientated or based upon the particular needs of the region they serve. Nevertheless courses at grunnfag and mellomfag are offered in some subjects and 3 District Colleges (Rogaland, Agder and Telemark) have particularly strong departments of English. Agder runs a course for translators.

5. The Teaching Cadre

The two means of entry to the teaching profession (the Colleges of Education, providing professional courses for work in the basic school, and the universities, supplying graduates equipped with an additional qualification corresponding roughly to the PGCE) have been described above (3.1 - 3.3 and 4. - 4.3). The two streams are now mingling, in that a College of Education qualification can be recognised as one element in a university degree, with the result that a growing number of teachers have had their education both at College of Education and at a university, and perhaps also at a District College. This in its turn reflects the need for staff who can combine general teaching of younger pupils with special-subject teaching at intermediate or higher levels. This may contribute to a unified profession, and perhaps ultimately help to bridge the gaps between the junior stage and the youth stage and the basic school and the upper secondary school. There are still some unqualified teachers in service (mainly young people acquiring experience which will help them to get places in Colleges of Education, and mainly teaching in small schools in the North), but the supply of teachers has increased considerably in the last decade, and there is now an over-production. Teacher unemployment is much less severe here than in Britain at present, but the retirement age is high (67, 68 or even 70), and the retirement rate over the next few years is officially estimated to be low. Teaching is still well regarded as a profession (though teachers are held in less esteem than was the case say even a decade ago) and salary scales for teachers, advisers, and educational administrators are adequate to provide a comfortable living standard. All in all, there are at least as many women teachers as men (drawing equal pay, of course), and in many married couples both partners are teachers. At the same time, many teachers are dissatisfied, not with pay or status or material working conditions, but because of the difficulties of implementing the teaching programmes laid down by legislation and by the Ministry, and because of the problems of teacher/pupil relations.

5.1 Teachers of English

Norway is now producing an adequate supply of qualified teachers of English as a result of which the British Council scheme for recruiting teachers through the Folkeuniversitet's English Secretariat has been discontinued. There are relatively few non-Norwegian teachers of English in the schools though expatriate teaching staff are found in Colleges of Education, District Colleges and the English departments of the universities. There are, however, no quotas or posts specially reserved for them and jobs must be gained in competition with Norwegian candidates.

5.2 In-service training etc

Educational legislation now makes provision for teachers in the basic school to spend one week of the school year on short courses arranged locally; those in English are concerned mainly with integration of work, production of materials, methods of stimulating pupils activity, etc. Teachers in the upper secondary school have three days for courses and meetings every year.

Statens laererkurs (the Courses Department of the Ministry of Education) Forsøksrådet for Skoleverket (the National Council for Innovation in Education), the main teachers' associations (Norsk Lektorlag and Norsk Laererlag), and the Pedagogiske Sentrer (Teachers' Centres) in the large towns also run courses both during the school year and in the vacations; those to do with English tend to be concerned with methods or materials rather than with improving language competence.

In addition, of course, large numbers of teachers find their way to Britain, chiefly during the summer, to attend British Council Summer Schools or courses organised by other bodies.

5.3 Associations of Teachers of English

Oddly enough, these hardly exist in any influential form. Local branches of the national teachers' associations have English sections, but they have no clear functions, and their meetings are poorly attended. A national association of teachers of modern languages was revived in 1976, with a publication Språk og språkundervisning which sets out to appeal to ordinary teachers.

6. Teaching Materials

A lot of money has gone into building and equipping schools, and other educational institutions in recent years. Design- and building-standards are high, and modern equipment has been provided plentifully. Norway has its fair share of language laboratories, tape-recorders, film projectors, cassette players and overhead projectors, and they are probably used as little and as much as in most other countries. School libraries, however, are rarely satisfactory. There is no general shortage of textbooks, though there are deficiencies in particular fields. Most school courses in English for the basic school are composite (study-book, work-book, teacher's handbook, tapes) though teachers complain of a lack of suitable soft-ware. Problem areas, however, include:

a. material for weak pupils, at all levels;

b. material of practical significance, at all levels;

c. material for special vocational and career orientated courses.

6.1 Textbooks

Course-books in schools have to be approved by the Ministry of Education. They are therefore generally published in Norway (though they may be adapted versions of courses originally written for other countries - Sweden in particular. see 6.2). Supplementary material comes from a variety of sources, and UK-produced simplified readers are quite widely used. At the post-school level British and US books are regularly prescribed or recommended. Although there is some encouragement for

experiment and innovation, such factors as the centralised system, national examinations at school level, ministry approval of school-books, and the conservatism of many teachers produce a general pattern of uniformity, despite the choice available.

6.2 Textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education

6.2.1 Compulsory school

English for You (Aslaksrud et al) (Aschehoug)

Hands Up (Olsson et al) (Tanum/Norli)

Contact (Ashton et al) Tanum/Norli)

English Now (Chamberlin et al) Dreyers

Say it in English (Engstrom et al) Gyldendal

On the Go (Hodell et al) Gyldendal

Going Up (Johansson et al) Fabritius

Kaleidoscope (MacMillan) Fabritius

This Way (Mellgren et al) Det Norske Samlaget

6.2.2 Upper Secondary Schools

Day to Day Things (Abrahamsen et al) Fabritius

Cross-Currents (Aslaksrud et al) Aschehoug

Challenge (ditto)

Crossroads (ditto)

Encounters (ditto)

That's Life (Berntsen et al) Cappelens

Literary and Factual (Birgersson) Universitetsforlaget

Outlook (Blom et al)Norsk Korrespondanseskole

The Choice (Carlson et al) Universitetsforlaget

Voices (Hardy et al) Gyldendal

Trade and Office (Elgaaen et al) Aschehoug

Economics (Elgaaen et al) Aschehoug

Introducing USA (Fleisher et al) Gyldendal

Caring for People (Gotobed et al) Aschehoug

Modern Business-Correspondence (Gusevik et al) Universitetsforlaget

Introduction to English for Shop Assistants and Junior Clerks (Halse) Gyldendal

A Modern English Grammar (Hoel) Aschehoug

Life and Letters (Krogh et al) Aschehoug

Engelsk grammatikk (Knap et al) Aschehoug

Worlds of English (Lausund) Gyldendal

Engelsk grammatikk (Løkke et al) Cappelens

Active English (Neumann et al) Fabritius

Dear Mr Sims (Naterop et al) Aschehoug

On the Way (Nielsen) Det Norske Samlaget

Interesting Things (Rudal et al) Fabritius

English Classical Text (Røstad) Universitetsforlaget

Read and discuss (Schei et al) Universitetsforlaget

That's Life (Neilsen) Cappelens

6.2.3 Special English

Material for special English is improving slowly, but in some fields old-fashioned or unsuitable books are still in use, eg in courses, in technical, maritime and commercial English. Among the better recent books are:

Dear Mr Sims (Elgaaen, Naterop) publ. Aschehoug (Norwegian)

Trade and Office (" ") " " (")

Teknisk Engelsk (Bergskaug) publ. NKI (Norwegian)

6.3 Other materials

Norsk Rikskringkasting (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) has regular TV and radio programmes in English for schools, chiefly for the 13-18 age groups. Films, records and cassettes are available from the US and Canadian Embassies, the British Council, Statens Filmsentral, etc. Our impression is that films, for example, are used mainly for their background and entertainment value, and are not properly exploited as part of a teaching process.

6.4 Other production; final comments

Teachers are beginning to produce their own material, on a small scale, partly to meet the requirements of group work (very necessary in unstreamed classes), partly to fill other gaps. Many short local courses are concerned with this. But material from local products is rarely made more widely available, even when it is the result of subsidised research.

British participation in co-publishing is in my view a real possibility. The need for a wider range of textbooks will become apparent as the upper secondary school develops along new lines and with growing vocational emphasis, and some publishers would like to look elsewhere than to Sweden for partners and sources.

Some labour party politicians have proposed a state publishing house for schoolbooks, with an eye to improving quality and reducing costs. Parents and teachers have protested that this would limit choice, and publishers argue that, as about 50% of their earnings come from the sale of textbooks, such a system might destroy the whole commercial publishing trade.

7. Adult Education

Adult education has a long history in Norway. The Oslo Studenternes Fri Undervisning was founded over 110 years ago to courage university students to give free teaching to working-class adults; similar organisations grew up in other university towns and elsewhere, and the SFUs are now organised in a national body, Folkeuniversitet, which offers vocational and liberal courses of all sorts, including study-groups working for university examinations, throughout the country. But adult education has also been recognised as a political weapon, and both the Labour movement, through Arbeidernes Opplysningsforbund (the Workers' Educational Association) and, on a smaller scale, the Conservative Party through Aftenskolen (the evening school) offer a wide range of courses, though with something of an emphasis on public speaking, politics and economics, organisation and administration, etc. The third strand is the correspondence colleges, which grew up for egalitarian reasons at a time when educational provision was much more unevenly distributed throughout the country than it is now, and which still attract a large following.

7.1 The 1976 Adult Education Act

This Act aims to democratise the adult education system, and to use adult education as a means of further democratising the country, by providing courses and facilities which will stimulate everyone into active participation in life-long learning. The Act operates through subsidised institutions such as those referred to in 7, through the kultursjefer (Directors of Culture) appointed by municipal and county authorities to expand and coordinate general cultural activities, including sports and athletics, in their area, and through new bodies. The most interesting of these is Norsk Fjernundervisning (Distance Education), which operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Education in close cooperation with NRK, the correspondence colleges, local cultural committees and departments, and the adult education bodies. It functions very much along the lines of the Open University, though offering courses also at lower levels and in more practical fields.

7.2 English in adult education

Though English is now taught well at schools, there is still a need for adult classes at all levels, met by Folkeuniversitetet, the AOF, Aftenskolen, and the correspondence colleges. NRK, both by radio and by TV, offers courses based on the Swedish Start material. The SFU in Oslo probably has about 2000 students a year in its English classes, attending classes from beginner level up to OPE and the RSA teachers' examination; AOF in Oslo has about the same number, but with less advanced work. The Bergen SFU offers (Jan 1977) a total of 74 courses

in English (cf 32 in French and 8 in German). The Folk University organisations and the AOF offer a good market for UK-published text-books. But the success of the Swedish 'Start' course suggests that the more closely coordinated adult education policy which is likely to come may favour concentration on one or two specially designed courses.

8. English outside the educational system

The voluntary bodies and correspondence schools referred to above have previously received fairly generous state subsidies, and are now being even more closely integrated into the system. Just as there are almost no private schools in Norway, so there are very few commercial language-teaching institutions. Linguaphone Institutt A/S; Inlingua Sprogskole; Norsk Språkinstitutt, and Wrede-Holm Engelskkurser are among the best-known, but none is really important in numerical terms. Nor are there many private teachers of English.

9. British support for the teaching of English

9.1 British Council

With English as well taught as it is in Norwegian schools and other institutions, there is certainly no need for the Council to undertake direct teaching, though our support and assistance, in the ways set out below, are helpful and appreciated:

1. We recruit and subsidise the two English consultants in the Ministry of Education (see 2.7).

2. The Oslo office has a small library of specialist ELT films, speech records and ELT cassettes.

3. The office also recruits for Council summer schools, forwards papers for many ELT visitors (individuals and study-tours) whose programmes are arranged by the Council, and publicises many summer schools and courses held by other bodies. From time to time we award bursaries or scholarships in ELT.

4. We have several ELT book exhibitions circulating around the Colleges of Education. We are cooperating (together with the other Scandinavian Representations) in the Nordic Conference for English Studies for university language and literature teachers, the first of which takes place in Oslo in September 1980.

5. We provide assistance whenever possible to representatives of UK publishers with ELT lists.

9.2 British support, for the teaching of English: expatriate staff

There are no lecturing or teaching posts in Norwegian institutions specifically reserved for UK nationals (see 5.1). There were in 1977 two chairs of English, in Trondheim and Tromsø, held by British subjects; eight or so UK lecturers at the universities in the English faculties, two in the regional colleges, and some five or six in the colleges of education. Quite a few British people undertake part-time teaching in the adult education organisations, and the SFU in Oslo and Bergen employ British heads for the English departments. You will find native speakers teaching in schools scattered throughout the country; most now regard themselves as settled, and most have acquired Norwegian spouses.

10. American support for the teaching of English

The US government gives no priority to ELT in Norway.

11. General statement on the educational situation

In the educational system as a whole, recent years have seen the introduction of large scale reforms at all levels; many people would say they have been too rapid and too sweeping, and that these actually working in the teaching profession have not been able to keep up with the intentions of the legislators or interpret in every day terms the instructions of the Ministry. Democracy and egalitarianism are certainly being promoted by these changes, but at the cost of confusion and friction and- most people believe - a lowering of standards. But this is a dangerous field to venture into - there is no-one whose views are not biased and subjective, and there are no absolutely rigid criteria which can be applied.

11.1 General statement on the ELT situation

What has been said above applies here. But some recent changes would command almost universal approval - English for all, more emphasis on spoken and oral skills, a progression designed for the average pupil but capable as far as possible of individual application, more up-to-date and stimulating material. On the other hand, completely unstreamed classes (incuding some handicapped pupils), the consequences of restricting and devaluing the examination system, and the lack of real intellectual stimulus have all created problems. One basic problem is to develop a form of teacher-training which accepts the consequences of the reforms in English, as in other subjects. There is still too much theory, and too little emphasis on the classroom situation. Within the schools themselves, there is a lack of correlation between final goals, teaching, and evaluation - even in the respective weighting of oral and written skills. The problems of providing 'individualisation' (enormous in themselves) have still to be solved in terms of group work in the classroom, and the requirements of an etiolated national examination system. Even at post-school levels one sometimes senses an air of 'laissez-faire' or withdrawal, almost defeatism among staff - a feeling that, in comparison with the tight old days, things are getting out of control. On the other hand in schools and elsewhere, there are many staff, and not all of them young, who are applying themselves with diligence and confidence, to the task of trying to make the new system work, not simply in English, but over the whole timetable.

12. Current Research and Bibliography

12.1 Research

This lies at a fairly humble level; it includes:

a. a number of graduate projects for the major examination in English, particularly at the University of Trondheim; on eg phonological error analysis;

b. work done by Forsøksrådet (the National Council for Innovation in Education) on questionnaires about the use of language laboratories or the choice of a third foreign language; or testing material such as the 'Kaleidoscope' course;

c. programmes developed by the Oslo Teachers' Centre on English in 3rd class, and on a model terminal examination for mixed ability classes.

d. The Norsk Pedagogisk Studie Samling (the Norwegian Education Reference Centre) may shortly be designated at the official national agency for the European Research Information Service.

e. A Trondheim University based survey is currently being conducted into English teaching in schools.

The paucity of productive research is one reason that in school-English, in school education generally, Norway is prepared to jump onto the research band-waggon of other countries, particularly Sweden.

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